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Eighth meeting of the Executive Committee of the  
Statistical Conference of the Americas of the  
Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean

Santo Domingo, 22 to 24 October 2008

**ACTIVITIES REPORT OF THE WORKING GROUP ON MIGRATION AND  
TRENDS IN REMITTANCES \***

\* Report prepared by the Working Group on Migration and Trends in Remittances coordinated by Honduras.

## **A. BACKGROUND**

The purpose of the region's national statistics offices is to generate basic and specialized information to support decision-making and the design of development policies, programmes and projects.

Migration and the flow of remittances from migrant workers affect nearly every economy in the world, including those of Latin America and the Caribbean. Governments therefore need information on the migration process and its repercussions on family incomes and the production base in order to estimate the proportion of resources that sustain national economies and fuel their growth.

In light of the impact that international migration and remittance volumes have on the countries of the region, Central America is promoting the project on migration and trends in remittances in the countries of Central America and the Caribbean under the Programme of Regional Statistical Work for Latin America and the Caribbean, July 2005-June 2007 of the Statistical Conference of the Americas of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean, which was approved by the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) within the framework of projects relating to regional public goods at the Fifth meeting of the Executive Committee of the Statistical Conference of the Americas of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean, held on 14 and 15 November 2005 in Mexico City (see annex 1).

In order to continue this project, a resolution was adopted at the fourth meeting of the Conference, held from 25 to 27 July 2007 in Santiago, to constitute the Working Group on Migration and Trends in Remittances, with Honduras as the designated coordinator of activities.

Subsequently, a proposed work plan for the Working Group on Migration and Trends in Remittances was presented and approved at the seventh meeting of the Executive Committee of the Conference, held on 29 and 30 November 2007, in Bogota.

The third and last meeting on the project regarding migration and trends in remittances in the countries of Central America and the Caribbean is due to be held during the second week of October 2008. The results and experiences of these countries will be presented on that occasion. This meeting will also serve as an opportunity to invite the countries of the Conference to join the Working Group on Migration and Trends in Remittances and to define and harmonize the conceptual framework for the topics that the Group will study and to draw up a research proposal.

## **B. DESCRIPTION**

This document reports on the follow-up and monitoring of the activities performed by the National Statistics Institute of Honduras within the framework of the project on migration and trends in remittances in the countries of Central America and the Caribbean and the progress made with regard to the work plan approved by the Conference at the meeting held in November 2007.

## **C. WORK PLAN**

### **1. Member countries**

The members of the Working Group on Migration and Trends in Remittances at the time of writing are: Colombia, Costa Rica, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Guatemala, Honduras (coordinator), Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, Paraguay and Uruguay.

### **2. Activities carried out under the work plan**

Up to May 2008, the National Statistics Institute of Honduras has carried out the following activities under the work plan of the Working Group on Migration and Trends in Remittances:

- In January 2008, all the countries of the Statistical Conference of the Americas of ECLAC were invited to participate in the Working Group on Migration and Trends in Remittances, and the following expressed their interest in joining: Colombia, Costa Rica, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Guatemala, Honduras (coordinator), Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, Paraguay and Uruguay. The national statistics offices have submitted the names of the officials that will act as institutional technical liaison officers and be responsible for the monitoring and follow-up of the activities carried out.
- A format was designed for presenting information on the experience of liaison officers with specific tasks and for indicating how to contact them (see annex 2).
- With the permission of the Inter-American Development Bank, arrangements have been made for the expert services of the consultant Alberto Padilla Trejo to be provided to the countries participating in the Working Group on Migration and Trends in Remittances.
- The terms of reference were defined for the international consultancy services that will be arranged to draw up the research proposal.
- The terms of reference and the budget for the international consultancy services to provide training to the Working Group on Migration and Trends in Remittances in the region have been prepared.
- A space has been created on the website of the National Statistics Institute of Honduras for the Working Group on Migration and Trends in Remittances. The Institute posts documents there drawn up on the basis of the database of the migration and remittances module that was incorporated into the permanent multi-purpose household survey of September 2006. All countries in the region may use the space to publish documents or make comments and observations.<sup>1</sup>
- Participating countries have been kept informed of the progress being made by the regional project through an information bulletin published on the website of the National Statistics Institute of Honduras.

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<sup>1</sup> See the website of the National Statistics Institute of Honduras [online] at <http://www.ine-hn.org>.

- A form has been designed for gathering information on the main indicators of international migration and sent out to the member countries of the Working Group on Migration and Trends in Remittances. The aim is to generate homogenous statistics on the subject at the regional level.
- The third and last meeting on the project on migration and trends in remittances in the countries of Central America and the Caribbean has been arranged with the support of the IDB. This meeting will provide an opportunity to learn about each country's experience to date and to promote the activities of the Working Group on Migration and Trends in Remittances of the Statistical Conference of the Americas of ECLAC more effectively.
- Permanent contact is maintained with the technical liaison officers in each of the national statistics offices of Latin America and the Caribbean with a view to keeping them informed of what the project on migration and trends in remittances in the countries of Central America and the Caribbean is expected to achieve and to improving channels of communication.
- The consultant to the project on migration and trends in remittances in the countries of Central America and the Caribbean has been asked to provide technical assistance and to draw up a proposed set of indicators of trends in migration and remittances in the region, which will be analysed by the Working Group on Migration and Trends in Remittances of the Statistical Conference of the Americas of ECLAC.

### 3. Fulfilment of the work plan

Activities	Date	Fulfilment
1. Definition of the member countries that will make up the Working Group on Migration and Trends in Remittances of the Statistical Conference of the Americas of ECLAC.	September 2007 – January 2008	100%
2. Request to the member countries of the Working Group on Migration and Trends in Remittances of the Statistical Conference of the Americas of ECLAC to designate an institutional liaison officer to monitor and follow up on activities.	November - January 2008	100%
3. Request the appointment of an expert to provide technical assistance and systemize the experience for the Statistical Conference of the Americas of ECLAC.	November 2007	100%
4. Definition of the communication process with countries' institutional liaison officers:		
(a) Exchange of information by e-mail or videoconferences	February - March 2008	100%
(b) The addresses of the liaison officers obtained by e-mail		100%
(c) Face-to-face meetings		The third meeting on the project on migration and remittance trends in Central America and the Caribbean has been scheduled for 9 and 10 October 2008 with the participation of the member countries of the Statistical Conference of the Americas of ECLAC.

Activities	Date	Fulfilment
5. Organization of activities for 2007-2009.		The third meeting of the Working Group on Migration and Trends in Remittances, which will be held in October 2008, will be the starting point for the activities proposed in section 5 of this table.
(a) Technical meetings to carry out preparatory work and formulate guidelines for the Working Group on Migration and Trends in Remittances: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>First meeting to exchange experiences, which will provide an opportunity to learn about the difficulties and positive experiences of the Central American countries in performing studies and incorporating the migration and remittance variables since the module was implemented. The concepts, criteria and definitions used by the member countries of the Working Group on Migration and Trends in Remittances will be examined with a view to putting together a proposal for regional indicators for internal and international migration and remittances.</li> </ul>		The dates are subject to change according to the consensus reached by the countries of the Conference.
(b) Monitoring and follow-up of the work carried out by each country in the process to define and design regional indicators in accordance with defined topic areas.		
(c) Preparation of national reports on the selected indicators with their respective metadata.		
(d) Receipt of national reports by the coordinating country of the Working Group on Migration and Trends in Remittances.		
(e) Meeting to present progress reports and results and define the most homogenised format possible for countries to present their updates and for the coordinating country to present a consolidated report.	November 2007 - December 2009	The dates are subject to change according to the consensus reached by the countries of the Conference.
(f) Preparation of a regional Latin American document presenting a compendium on migration and remittances.		
(g) Presentation of results to the Conference.		
6. Preparation of a timetable of activities for the abovementioned period. This timetable must be agreed to by the members of the Working Group on Migration and Trends in Remittances of the Statistical Conference of the Americas of ECLAC at its first technical meeting.	2007-2009	This will be prepared after the third meeting on the project on migration and trends in remittances in the countries of Central America and the Caribbean.
7. Application for technical and financial assistance from the countries that have offered cooperation.	November 2007-2009	An application to the IDB is being processed.
8. Preparation of a progress report on the project on migration and remittances in the countries of Central America and the Caribbean, covering the consultancy period.	November 2008	Pending
9. Follow-up of the activities related to the sustainability of information on migration and remittances in the countries of Latin America and the Caribbean.	As of 2009	Pending

#### **D. RESULTS AND PRODUCTS TO BE PRESENTED AT THE FIFTH MEETING OF THE STATISTICAL CONFERENCE OF THE AMERICAS OF ECLAC**

- Identification of the time-frames for data processing and those responsible for this task, as well as the conceptual framework for the construction of harmonized indicators.
- Identification of specific study topics according to each country's needs.
- Creation of sub-working groups according to the realities of migration in each country.
- Identification of a set of minimum standard regional indicators on international migration and remittances that can be drawn up on the basis of the information available.

#### **E. GUIDELINES FOR THE PERIOD 2009-2011**

- Preparation of a proposal for the conceptual framework, including its thematic scope and length, and definition of the research indicators.
- Preparation of a proposal for indicators to be used throughout the region, using the information available in the respective statistics offices.
- Preparation of a regional report on the indicators supplied by each country's institutional liaison officer.
- Preparation of a research proposal stipulating the type of survey to be conducted (i.e., whether the research will be independent or part of a household survey), the sample population, the possible questionnaires to be used, as well as the time frames for gathering, processing and presenting the results. The performance of this survey is subject to the obtention of financing.



## Annex 1

## REPORT OF ACTIVITIES OF THE WORKING GROUP ON MIGRATION AND TRENDS IN REMITTANCES <sup>1</sup>

The latest progress made in the countries of Central America and the Caribbean is as follows:

### Honduras

**National Statistical Institute of Honduras (INE).** Research performed through a module incorporated into the permanent multi-purpose household survey that, prior to the harmonized version, included the topics of return migration, emigration and receipt of remittances. The same survey investigated the topic of international immigration as well.

**Period applied:** September 2006.

**Status:** Results published nationally. Tabulations also published in accordance with the harmonized proposal. INE continues to include questions on emigration and remittances in the permanent household survey on a six-monthly basis. Information is available on some variables for previous years.<sup>2</sup>

### Costa Rica

**National Institute of Statistics and Census (INEC).** Research performed using a module incorporated into the employment census that covered migration, emigration and the reception and dispatch of remittances according to the harmonized version.<sup>3</sup>

**Period applied:** July 2007.

**Status:** Report prepared jointly with Universidad Nacional de Costa Rica.

### Dominican Republic

**National Statistical Office (ONE).** Research conducted using a module that inquired about immigration, emigration and the receipt and dispatch of remittances incorporated into the National Multi-Purpose Household Survey (ENHOGAR).

**Period applied:** Fourth quarter of 2007.

**Status:** Report has been drawn up on the basis of the data obtained.

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<sup>1</sup> The reference period for return migration was the last 10 years; the reference period for international migration was unlimited, and the reference period for remittances was the 12 months period to the interview.

<sup>2</sup> Most recent research: national survey of living conditions (ENCOVI) of 2004, and the permanent multi-purpose household surveys of 2007 and of 2008.

<sup>3</sup> The harmonized version sets out basic indicators for Central America and the Caribbean regarding immigration, emigration and the receipt and dispatch of remittances.



**El Salvador**

**Department of Statistics and Censuses (DIGESTYC).** Applied a module on emigration and remittances received according to the harmonized version as part of the employment and income survey.

**Period applied:** Second semester of 2007.

**Status:** The database is in the process of being sent to the consultant for revision and verification of the data's consistency.

**Nicaragua**

**National Institute of Development Information (INIDE).** Applied a module on emigration and the receipt of remittances according to the harmonized version that was incorporated into the national household living standards survey.

**Period applied:** July 2007.

**Status:** Two investigations were conducted.

**Panama**

**Directorate of Statistics and Censuses (DEC).** Applied a module on emigration and the receipt of remittances in the household survey.

**Period applied:** March 2008.

**Status:** The database is in the process of being sent to the consultant for revision and verification of the data's consistency.

**Guatemala**

**National Institute of Statistics (INE).** A date has yet to be set for the application of one of the migration or remittance modules in its employment and income survey.

## Annex 2

**LIST OF INSTITUTIONAL LIAISON OFFICERS**

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**COSTA RICA**

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**HONDURAS (COORDINATING COUNTRY)**

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## Annex 3

**COURSE ON INTERNATIONAL MIGRATION AND REMITTANCES <sup>1</sup>****A. OBJECTIVE**

Impart information about the trends in migration and remittances in the region and discuss the methodological aspects of the harmonization project carried out by the IDB to estimate these phenomena in the countries of Central America and the Caribbean.

**B. DESCRIPTION**

The course will provide general information on international migration and remittances and the experiences and difficulties encountered in measuring these flows, as well as on how this information can be put to use in public policymaking.

The methodology applied for the estimation process in the modules on migration and remittances incorporated into the employment surveys of the countries of Central America and the Caribbean under the project sponsored by the IDB will be presented. A real database will be used as a case study.

**Duration:** 3 days.

**Topics covered****Day 1**

1. Migration trends in Latin America and the Caribbean and main data sources.
2. Trends in international remittances in Latin America and the Caribbean and main data sources.
3. Use of survey information for policymaking. The case of Guatemala.
4. Experiences in measuring international migration in Latin America and the Caribbean. The case of Mexico.
5. Experiences in estimating international remittances in Latin America and the Caribbean. The case of the host country.

**Day 2**

1. Project to harmonize the measurement of migration and remittances in Central America and the Caribbean through household surveys.
2. Questionnaires and conceptual issues in the study of migration.
3. Evaluation of the internal consistency and quality of information on international migration.
4. Generation of indicators on international migration.

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<sup>1</sup> This course was originally proposed by the project consultant, Alberto Padilla Trejo.

**Day 3**

1. Questionnaires and conceptual issues in the study of remittances.
2. Evaluation of the internal consistency and quality of information on international remittances.
3. Generation of indicators on international remittances.

**Instructors**

- Experts from the Latin American and Caribbean Demographic Centre (CELADE) - Population Division of ECLAC for topic 1 of day 1.
- Experts from the Multilateral Investment Fund (MIF), for topic 2 of day 1.
- Experts from the International Organization for Migration (IOM) of Guatemala for topic 3, day 1.
- Officials of INEGI of Mexico for topic 4 of day 1.
- Official from the central bank of the host country for topic 5 of day 1.
- IDB consultant for the topics on days 2 and 3.